

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 07246

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, FR, CSCE
SUBJECT: FRENCH RESTRICTIONS ON NATO CONSULTATIONS

REFS: (A) USNATO 6724, (B) PARIS 21671, (C) STATE 182284,
- (D) THE HAGUE 4119
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SUMMARY: WE CONCUR WITH GENERAL GUIDELINES REF C ON
HOW TO DEAL WITH THE FRENCH ON NATO CONSULTATIONS.
OUR DETAILED THOUGHTS ON THIS ISSUE WERE CONTAINED
IN USNATO 5135. BOTH THE OTHER ALLIES AND WE
RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACCOUNT OF FRENCH
CONCERNS BY SEEKING AD HOC ARRANGEMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL
SITUATIONS IN ORDER TO BRING THEM ALONG ON CONSULTATION
QUESTIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE BELIEVE WE MUST TAKE
CARE NOT TO ALLOW FRENCH ATTITUDES TO SHAPE NATO
CONSULTATIONS IN WAYS CONTRARY TO OUR INTERESTS. THE
AREA WHERE THE FRENCH HAVE TAKEN THE MOST RIGID POSITION
IN RECENT MONTHS IS CSCE. THIS CABLE REVIEWS THE SITUATION
REGARDING FRANCE AND CSCE CONSULTATIONS AND OFFERS
VIEWS ON QUESTION POSED IN REF C RE FURTHER SUCH
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CONSULTATIONS AT NATO. END SUMMARY.
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1. STARTING A YEAR AGO, THE FRENCH MOVED FROM THEIR
"RESERVED" POSITION ON CSCE CONSULTATIONS AT NATO AND
BEGAN TO OPPOSE AGREED ALLIANCE PAPERS ON CSCE (EXCEPT
CBMS). AS THE DEPARTMENT POINTED OUT IN REF C, PERMREP
TIME MADE CLEAR AT THE APRIL 27 NAC MEETING ON CSCE THE

FRENCH POSITION ON NATO CSCE CONSULTATIONS WHEN HE SAID THAT, ASIDE FROM CBMS, FRANCE WAS "READY AND WILLING TO CONTINUE THE EXCHANGES OF VIEWS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE IN THE OTHER AREAS COVERED BY THE FINAL ACT. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR THESE CONSULTATIONS TO BE AIMED AT ADOPTING JOINTLY-AGREED POSITIONS, PROPOSALS OR TEXTS". (WE NOTE THAT THE FRENCH TOOK CARE TO HAVE THE TEXT OF TINE'S STATEMENT RECORDED IN THE SUMMARY RECORD OF THE APRIL 27 MEETING - C-R(78) 14).

IN OTHER WORDS, EXCHANGES OF VIEWS AND INFORMATION ON CSCE ARE PERMISSIBLE; EXCEPT FOR CBMS, A JOINT APPROACH ON POSITIONS AND PROPOSALS AND AGREED PAPERS ARE NOT.

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2. OVER THE PAST YEAR THE OTHER ALLIES AND WE HAVE HAD DECLINING SUCCESS IN ACCOMMODATING THE FRENCH IN REGARD TO CSCE ACTIVITIES HERE. WHEN THEY INITIALLY OPPOSED A POLADS PAPER FOR THE DECEMBER 1977 MINISTERIAL, WE WERE ABLE TO PERSUADE THEM TO GO ALONG WITH A WATERED-DOWN PAPER WHICH FOCUSED ON SOVIET/EASTERN EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS OF BELGRADE (77 USNATO 11807). HOWEVER, THEY ADAMANTLY OPPOSED A POLADS PAPER ON BELGRADE FOR THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT, AND WHEN A CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF THE APRIL 27 NAC MEETING WAS SUGGESTED AS A SUBSTITUTE, FRENCH PERMREP TINE REJECTED THIS COMPROMISE. THE RECENT EPISODE OVER THE CIRCULATION OF A PAPER BY THE POLADS CHAIRMAN (REF A) IS INDICATIVE OF THE LENGTHS CONFIDENTIAL

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TO WHICH TINE IS WILLING TO GO TO BLOCK THE PREPARATION AT NATO OF EVEN THE MOST ROUTINE KIND OF PAPERS ON CSCE, INCLUDING A PAPER WHICH WOULD SIMPLY SUM UP THE RESULTS OF A MEETING. AS STATED REF A, THE "PRINCIPLE" RAISED BY TINE WAS, IN OUR VIEW, A PRETEXT AND SHOULD BE SEEN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF GENERAL FRENCH RESISTANCE TO THE PREPARATION HERE OF ANY PAPERS ON CSCE. (ON THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE, SYG LUNS HAS INFORMED AMBASSADOR BENNETT THAT AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION TINE DID NOT OBJECT TO THE CIRCULATION OF FUTURE CHAIRMEN'S REPORTS TO THOSE DELEGATIONS WISHING TO RECEIVE THEM (SEE REF A FOR BACKGROUND)).

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3. WE DO NOT HAVE THE IMPRESSION THE OTHER ALLIES LOOK TO THE US ALWAYS TO TAKE THE LEAD IN DEALING WITH FRENCH ON CSCE ISSUES, ALTHOUGH THEY CERTAINLY EXPECT US TO DO OUR PART AND TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE. SINCE THE FRENCH HAVE TRIED TO DIRECT CONSULTATIONS ON NON-CBM CSCE ISSUES AWAY FROM NATO AND INTO THE EC-9, WE HAVE BELIEVED IT APPROPRIATE TO LET ALLIES FROM THE NINE GET OUT IN FRONT. THUS, WHEN THE FRENCH TRIED TO BLOCK THE POLADS MEETING WITH EXPERTS ON THE SCIENTIFIC FORUM (USNATO

5437), REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINE AND OTHER ALLIES TOOK THE LEAD, WITH THE US FOLLOWING, IN PERSUADING THE FRENCH TO ACCEPT THE MEETING. AT THE SCIENTIFIC FORUM CONSULTATION (USNATO 5884), THE DUTCH POLAD FIRST ASKED THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TO CIRCULATE HIS NOTES OF THE MEETING; OTHERS, INCLUDING THE US REP, THEN JOINED IN.

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4. IN OUR VIEW, THE MAIN TEST WITH THE FRENCH ON CSCE

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CONSULTATIONS IS YET TO COME. IN PREPARATION FOR THE BELGRADE MEETING THE ALLIES DEVELOPED AT NATO COMPREHENSIVE PAPERS OUTLINING THE ALLIED APPROACH TO THE REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION, NEW PROPOSALS AND OTHER ISSUES IN ALL THE AREAS COVERED BY THE FINAL ACT. THESE PAPERS WERE DEVELOPED IN POLADS AND ECONADS AND AGREED BY THE NAC, SOME AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. IF THE ALLIES WISH TO PROCEED IN THE SAME MANNER FOR THE MADRID MEETING -- AND JUDGING FROM STATEMENTS BY SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM CAPITALS AT THE APRIL 27 NAC MEETING (USNATO 4368), MANY DESIRE TO DO SO, PROBABLY BEGINNING IN 1979 -- THE FRENCH POSITION OPPOSING AGREED PAPERS, IF IT IS MAINTAINED, IS LIKELY TO BE A STUMBLING BLOCK.

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5. SYG LUNS HAS PRIVATELY INFORMED AMBASSADOR BENNETT THAT HE RECENTLY SPOKE WITH FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD ABOUT TINE'S RESTRICTIVE ATTITUDE TO NATO CONSULTATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE ON CSCE, AND THAT DE GUIRINGAUD CLAIMED TO BE UNINFORMED ON THE MATTER.

LUNS HAD THE IMPRESSION FROM THIS CONVERSATION THAT TINE MAY HAVE BEEN EXCEEDING HIS INSTRUCTIONS, AND THAT WE MIGHT HOPE FOR MORE FLEXIBILITY IN THE FUTURE. MANY
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AT NATO SUSPECT THAT TINE AT TIMES OPERATES INDEPENDENTLY OF PARIS INSTRUCTIONS, AND WE NOTE DUTCH COMMENTS IN THIS REGARD (REF D). WE HOPE LUNS' OBSERVATION ON FLEXIBILITY WILL PROVE TRUE, BUT, WITH THE FRENCH RECORD IN MIND, WE ARE SKEPTICAL. IN THE MEANTIME, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE OTHER ALLIES IN DEALING WITH THE SITUATION.

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6. IN REGARD TO PARA 6, REF C, WE DO NOT SEE A PROBLEM IN SHARING WITH THE ALLIES THE GENERAL CONCLUSIONS OF A US REVIEW OF CSCE POLICY OR WASHINGTON'S THINKING ABOUT CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-NATO COUNTRIES, OR TO ASK FOR ALLIED RESPONSES TO THE ISSUES WE RAISE. IT IS RECOGNIZED BY ALL, EVEN THE FRENCH, THAT ANY ALLY IS FREE TO DISCUSS AND PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ANY ISSUE IT WISHES IN NATO COMMITTEES. ADDITIONALLY, IN POLADS AND ECONADS WHERE CSCE IS CUSTOMARILY DEALT WITH, THE SUBJECT IS A FIXTURE ON THE COMMITTEES' AGENDAS. FINALLY, THE TYPE OF CONSULTATION EVIDENTLY ENVISAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT WOULD APPEAR TO FALL WITHIN THE AREA OF "EXCHANGE OF VIEWS" WHICH TINE HAS INDICATED WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO FRANCE. HOWEVER, IF WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO MOVE TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF PAPERS DEALING WITH AN AGREED CSCE POLICY OR CONTACTS WITH THE NNA'S AND EASTERN COUNTRIES, OPPOSITION FROM THE FRENCH COULD BE EXPECTED.

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7. TO SUM UP, MOST ALLIES AND WE ARE PREPARED TO TRY TO ACCOMMODATE FRENCH POSITION, SO LONG AS WE DO NOT COMPROMISE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES. HOWEVER, OVER THE PAST YEAR PARAMETERS SET FORTH BY THE FRENCH HAVE LEFT AN INCREASINGLY SMALL AMOUNT OF ROOM FOR MANEUVER. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT IF WE ALLOW PREOCCUPATION WITH
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PROBLEMS POSED BY THE FRENCH TO AFFECT IN ADVANCE OUR THINKING AND APPROACH TO NATO CONSULTATIONS ON CSCE OF EVEN THE RELATIVELY LIMITED AND "ACCEPTABLE" KIND DESCRIBED IN PARA 1 ABOVE AND IN PARA 6, REF C, WE RUN THE SERIOUS RISK OF UNDERMINING OUR POSITION AND THAT OF THE OTHER ALLIES REGARDING ALLIANCE CONSULTATIONS, NOT ONLY ON

CSCE BUT ON OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES. WE BELIEVE THAT,
WHILE WE SHOULD GIVE FULL CONSIDERATION TO FRENCH CON-
CERNS, OUR APPROACH TO CONSULTATIONS SHOULD START FROM
THE BASIS OF WHAT WE PERCEIVE TO BE IN THE INTEREST OF
THE US AND THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE. BENNETT

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